FADCA>BEACON

THE FLORIDA AMATEUR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No. 10 Brandon, Florida October, 1984

NEWS AND VIEWS
Gwyn Reedy, W1BEL

The best news this month is DRNET, which stands for Digital Radio Net, the successor to PRNET. Wags have begun calling it Dr. NET after the new Dr. DX toy, but I prefer to call it DRagNET since it really helps to get the facts (just the facts, maam) to the packet radio community. This new E-mail service was brought about in the following manner. One Sunday at 00:30 I received a telephone call from Gordon Beattie, N2DSY, in New Jersey. Gordon and I met when I lived there in 1980-2. Another friend, KA2BQE, had shown Gordon an issue of the BEACON, and he called to find out what was new in Florida after 2 years. During the course of the 3 hour phone call, Gordon revealed the existence of an E-mail system that would be able to host a packet radio forum. I strongly encouraged him to contact Pete Eaton, WB9FLW, who was frantically searching for alternatives to the discontinued PRNET. Gordon made the call, they both did a lot of work, and with the gracious cooperation of the network authorities, DRNET came into being. DRNET is not free, but a number of key packet people have made the commitment to participate in the service at their personal expense. FADCA is fortunate to be well represented in the number of participants allowed, and that is a reflection of the development and organizational work that has taken place here. I'm sure the BEACON will reflect the availability of nationwide news from DRNET in future issues. I want to personally thank all those that worked so hard to bring about DRNET, and thank the sponsors of the network for their vision and generosity. Gordon was one of the original advocates of X.25 for amateur packet radio, and is now involved in the experimentation with level 3 protocol. He has promised some articles for the BEACON.

On a recent business trip I was fortunate to be able to spend an afternoon with Bob Bruniga, WB4APR. Bob is an instructor in the Electrical Engineering Dept. at the Naval Academy, and an avid packet radio experimenter. He operates the HF to (Southern) EASTNET Gateway on 10.1497 MHz and a number of digipeaters in the Maryland area. Bob showed me his portable packet station with a TRS-80 model 100 computer, IC2AT, and Ashby TNC. It is all contained in a medium sized briefcase along with a string of NiCad D cells. (With Radio Shack's current sale on model 100s, I know of a number of such portable stations being constructed in Fla.) He also demonstrated the operation of his HF gateway by remotely checking into the W3IWI bulletin board and sending the results out on 30m. The gateway uses two Vancouver TNCs, a VIC-20, and the appropriate HF and VHF radios. The software allows monitoring to be accomplished across the gateway, as well as establishing connections with the gateway itself and connections to stations on the 'other' frequency. He uses surplus VADIC 103 modems to generate and receive the 200 Hz shift tones for the HF work. FADCA has some of these modems for the convenience of our members; see the article elsewhere in this issue.

Also on that trip, I was able to have dinner and a nice visit with Bob Carpenter, W3OTC. Bob works for the National Bureau of Standards and has experience in meteor scatter communications dating to the late 1950s. Bob and Ralph, W0RPK, conducted the first packet QSO on 6m METSCAT a few months ago. Bob and I plan to conduct some Fla to Md tests when he gets his FT-726R repaired and I get my antenna properly mounted. His calculations have been borne out by amateur experiments so far, and he does not foresee very high throughput on METSCAT circuits. It will be interesting to do experiments with him.

FADCA VOICE NETS

REGIONAL (FLORIDA AND ADJOINING STATES): 3958 KHz Sunday at 0800 EST. NCS: K4NTA
SOUTHNET SOFTCOM (NETWORKING SOFTWARE COMMITTEE): 3958 KHz, Friday at 2100 EST. NCS: N2WX
BRANDON (TAMPA BAY AREA): 147.165 (+600) Sunday at 1930 EST. NCS: KF4EF
BREVARD COUNTY AREA: 147.060 (+600) Sunday at 2000 EST. NCS: N2WX
BROWARD COUNTY AREA: 145.270 (-600) Sunday at 2000 EST. NCS: K4GFG
ORLANDO AREA: 147.285 (+600) Sunday at 2100 EST. NCS: K4AHO
SOUTHNET statewide frequencies:
Primary LAN:145.010
Local file xfers QSY to 145.030 /050 /070 /090
220 LAN (20 KHz bandwidth): 221.4
Medium Speed Linking (100 KHz b/w):220.570

SOUTHNET ELECTRONIC MAIL SERVICES

BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEMS

BRANDON (TAMPA BAY AREA): W1BEL (testing)
MIAMI: NK4K
PALM BAY: N4AJH (testing)
STUART (EAST CENTRAL FLORIDA): K4NTA
WEST PALM BEACH: WD4LHF

NON-REAL TIME GATEWAYS

COMPUSERVE HAMNET: W4PCM, N5AUV, K4GFG
DIGITAL RADIO NET: K4NTA, N2WX, W1BEL
HF and OSCAR-10: Real soon now...

DIGITAL EVENTS

NOVEMBER 12. Demonstration at the ST. AUGUSTINE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, 7:30 PM by KB4B and other FADCA members from Jacksonville.
NOVEMBER 13. Demonstration at the FT. PIERCE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB by K4NTA and other FADCA members.
NOVEMBER 24/25. CLEARWATER (SAND KEY) Hamfest and FADCA Seminar/demonstration. Contact K4RHD.
DECEMBER 1/2. BROWARD Hamfest with FADCA packet demonstration booth and Packet Seminar 1PM on Saturday. Contact K4GFG.
DECEMBER 2. National Teleconference Radio Net featuring Lyle Johnson, WA7GXD and Harold Price, NK6K on packet radio. Carried on many 2m repeaters.
DECEMBER 3. Packet presentation to the BREVARD REPEATER ASSN by N4AJH and other FADCA members. 7 PM.
FEBRUARY 2/3. MIAMI Hamboree and Packet Seminar. Dade Radio Club/FADCA Conference on Applications of packet radio, 10 AM Sunday.

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Maybe I need more business trips! Besides the above visitations, I was able to construct a TAPR TNC kit, Vancouver daughter board, and a Z-AMTOR board. The Z-AMTOR article appeared in Feb 1984 QST, and the printed circuit board is now available from Circuit Board Specialists, P.O. Box 969, Pueblo, CO 81002. The board is expensive ($42+), and has some mistakes on it, but it makes for more rapid construction than wire wrap. There is some chance I got a pre-production board and that the layout and labeling errors will be corrected in later versions. Will report on the board's operation when it is checked out. Jon Bloom, KE3Z, in the ARRL lab is also checking out the pc board.

As I write this, Sunday, October 28, I am listening to packet activity on 10.1497 MHz and also hearing activity on 10.147 and 14.1035 MHz. Getting on HF packet has been made difficult in the past for TAPR TNC owners because parts substitutions and modem retuning are required for the 200 Hz shift commonly used on HF. Since the Vancouver/ASHBY boards do not have a built in modem, 200 Hz shift involves substituting a modem that generates the proper tones. This same approach for the TAPR kit board (using the modem disconnect fitting) makes transfer from HF to VHF operation rapid and convenient.

Bob Bruniga, WB4APR, has obtained a supply of used Vadic 103 modems which contain active filters with very good characteristics. Connection of the modems to TAPR, and Vancouver/Ashby boards is reasononably straightforward. No information about modem use with GLB TNCs is available. Power can be obtained from the TAPR TNC power rails. Several circuits are available for the interface, depending on whether you prefer quick and dirty or overkill. FADCA has a few of the modems on hand for those wishing to try HF operation. KF4EF and N4ZQ are interfacing these to a BETA and Kit TNC respectively, so a builder/user report will be available in the next BEACON. Circuits and information from these tests will be included with any modems provided by FADCA. The original supply of 5 modems is depleted, but 5 more are inbound in the mail. Cost is $25 each, plus $1 for postage. The modems are not useable for telephone service as delivered, and it is requested they be ordered only for packet use. First come, first served. There may be shipping delays if the stock has to be refilled from WB4APR.

TAPR is producing a pc board to allow two 8530 SCC ICs to be piggybacked on the Xerox 820 board. It is named the FAD board by its designer, N2WX. First prototypes are being checked, and a production run will follow. Pete Eaton is handling the layout and production. That modification will enable the 820 to serve as a network switch in level 3 experiments such as the planned link from Tampa to Melbourne on 220 MHz. The 820 will also be able to serve as a bridge between several local network frequencies. Please don't bother TAPR with orders until the product is announced by them for ordering.

KB4B has promised to begin a column next month giving the Jacksonville news. For now: The WB4RCY-1 digipeater has been moved to Orange Park and has a 4 el beam at 400ft pointed Southeast. The digipeater suffered badly from spurs on 145.01 at its former downtown Jacksonville location. A number of the TAPR kits sold at the Jax hamfest in August are still awaiting delivery of a cabinet from TAPR to begin construction. Having just built one I think it possible to build, test, and operate a kit with later cabinet installation not causing any rework. Hope to hear more stations on the air soon.

From Electronics Week, Sept 24th issue: "Work is currently under way at several large IC houses to design IEEE-standard chips for the message handling and error-detection protocols defined in the transport layer. AMD is examining what features and interfaces customers would be willing to pay for, and Motorola Corp's Semiconductor Products Sector, Phoenix, AZ, is at work on a transport level chip, so limited production quantities of the chip should be ready in 1985."

Hope to get the mailing back on schedule sometime, but no more predictions. I want to thank all the contributors to the newsletter. The ready formatted articles and mailing assistance are very much appreciated. K4RHD contributed a great deal of material last month about saving the 220 band, but space did not permit printing it. Thanks, Bill for all the effort. 73 till next month.

Two new Jr ops in packet land: Steven Jay Voss, 8/9/84, 7# 2 oz. to WB8ZPE and XYL. Jon Lawrence Whitaker, 9/9/84, 9# 1 oz. to WD4JKM and XYL.

BYTES FROM THE WRITE ONLY MEMORY

by Ted Huf, K4NTA
1829 N.W. Pinetree Way, Stuart, Fl 33494

The Stuart wide area digipeater (K4NTA-1) has been in operation for over 18 months. The TNC is a TAPR Beta board and the radio used is a GE Mastr Progress Line base station running 55 watts output (We are looking for a new 5894A final for it because it should be 90.) Receiver sensitivity is boosted by a GAsFet preamp with a .5 dB noise figure. The antenna is a home made 4 element yagi at 310 feet pointed gererally towards Tampa. It is fed with 1/2" CATV hardline. Coverage for the most part is good to the N2WX-7 digipeater 55 miles north in Melbourne, WA4ARE-1 40 miles south in West Palm Beach and to W1BEL's home station in Brandon, 130 miles.

The latest addition to the operation of K4NTA-1 is a remote terminal. I can now operate K4NTA-1 from my home as a normal TNC while it is in use as a digipeater. Here is how it is done. My home is about 3/4 miles form the tower where K4NTA-1 is located. This site is the main receive point (headend) for the CATV company for which I work. To remote the digipeater TNC, I am using two RF modems designed for CATV data communiation. These work pretty much like telephone modems except they are connected to a CATV system instead of telephone lines. The modems use paired frequencies of 8.2 and 113.2 Mhz. The one at the tower site receives on 8.2 and transmits on 113.2. The one at my home does the opposite. Transmission speed is at 4800 bauds using 100 Khz bandwidth FSK. Not very efficient on BW vs. baud, but there is lots of room for data in the CATV spectrum. The CATV spectrum is separated into two bands, 5-30 and 50-450 Mhz. A CATV amplifier has filters to direct the 5-30 Mhz (called the sublow band) to a sublow amplifier at each amp station. It is configured so that the sublow goes upstream back to the headend. The 50-450 Mhz band is subdivided into 4 bands. The lowband is 50-108; midband 108-174; highband 174-220 and superband 220-450 Mhz. Most of the 50-450 Mhz bands are used for TV channels, but there are slots that are normally used for data. The sublow band is used almost exclusively for data.

The addition of this remote terminal will allow my home station (K4NTA) to remain on line with the Stuart BBS. It will now only be down when I am using the TRS-80 for word processing or programming.

A few notes about using the Stuart BBS (K4NTA). Please refer to the last months FADCA > BEACON where the various help screens were listed. When you connect with K4NTA and the BBS is on line, it checks to see who it is connected with and logs you in. It strips off the SSID number so if you use more than one TNC, you are logged in by your call letters only. If it is your first time on the BBS you are told that you are a new user. When you get the main command line, send an "A" and you will be added as a user. Then the BBS looks back at the last 50 message numbers and checks to see if any un-delivered messages are for you. If it finds any, the headers are sent to you and each one is marked so that you can get them with the RM command.

Commands that have subcommands can be sent on one line. For example, the RM can be send at once or SF1400 means scan forward stating at message 1400.

The BBS reformats its output depending on your screen width. The default if 54 characters, but you can change it for your particular terminal by entering "X" on the main command line. This will also allow you to change the clear screen codes. Forget about the password, it is a carryover from the old version and is not used on packet radio. This reformatting needs to be considered when leaving a message for someone. You should remember that it will be reformatted for the readers screen when he sees it. If you start a line with a period (.), the BBS reformatter will start a new line at that point and not send the period. Also you can enter as many characters on a line as you wish up to 255. But, if you exceed

that number, your message will be lost and you will get an error message. The "L" subcommand will preview the message formatted for your screen.

A new feature on the BBS is the undeliveried message log. After each use the BBS checks the last 50 messages to see who has messages that have not been delivered to the addressee. This list is transmitted every 10 minutes and digipeated via K4NTA-1 and other digipeaters.

Please feel free to use the Stuart FADCA BBS and don't worry about messing something up. The software is pretty much bullet proof. More next month.

LETTERS TO FADCA

22 Oct 84

Dear Gwyn,

I certainly enjoyed our telephone conversation last Friday. I feel confident that I have made a good move joining FADCA. Just from listening to the activity on the Sunday net [Brandon] I am convinced that I'm in with a group that enjoys electronics as I do and this isn't just another bunch of operators. I'm really looking forward to total involvement in Packet Radio. I took your advice and sent my dues to TAPR. I want to get as much information as is available as soon as I can....

Sincerely, Don Deem, KB4LLO

Thanks for the good words, Don. Don has recently become severly handicapped and is finding friends and fulfillment in the packet part of amateur radio. He has an attitude all of us able-bodied hams could take a lesson from, yours truly included. Don has volunteered to write a new phamplet on packet radio at a beginners level for handout at demonstrations. I expect you will be hearing a lot from KB4LLO. (Ed.)

Gwyn Reedy, W1BEL,

Gwyn, thanks for the new FADCA > BEACON and for putting me back on your list. I had not seen the interim issues. After a strong burst of activity this Spring in the Atlanta area where Doug, KD4NC, and I gave several presentations to local groups, I had some job pressures I could not ignore.....There were some communications problems in coordinating a packet symposium at the Atlanta Hamfest this year and I guess there was no demonstration. Next year we should remedy that. The burden is great when you are trying to carry the whole thing with just a few people.

We are moving along again in this area and probably have the critical mass to ...start an organization and spread the load. The name of the organization is GRAPES, Georgia Radio Amateur Packet Enthusiasts. We have a dedicated packet repeater in the Atlanta area on 146.01/61 full duplex. I hope to convert my Apple to full time BBS mode by December..

Sincerely, Eric Ellison, N4CI
GRAPES, P.O.BOX 223
Conyers, GA 30208

The following are excerpts from a long letter to Dave, N4JWX.

David,

Thanks much for the card. It is really amazing how many people are getting GATEWAY. It seems that one of out biggest problems in packet is getting in touch with other interested people. It remends me very much of the early days of 2 meter FM operation....

...The biggest help would be to work on the linking system coming out of Florida thru Georgia. We have our first machine on the air here. It is on 146.73 but will be moved to 145.01 when the second machine is installed....This machine will be located in the north central part of GA about 30 miles from the N. Carolina border. It will be at an altitude of 3000 to 4000 ft and will, we hope, get us well into the Carolinas. It will be linked with the machine which we now have on the air in Atlanta. Our first goal is to get to Charlotte, NC, since the network up the East Coast is in fairly good shape north of Charlotte. We are talking with two groups in the Carolinas about providing one more link between our north GA machine and Charlotte....I do not know when that will be. When they do get it on, we will turn our efforts to the south...We had to make a choice of which direction to go and it looked as if we could get the most done the quickest by working on the northern link...we will link with the Albany, GA group and see if we can help them get to Florida. Anything that can be done to provide a link this way out of Florida would be the biggest help I can think of, David....Secondly, getting a list of all the packet users in the Southeast is something that will need to be done. During this start up period for packet, knowing who and where the people are seems to be a big problem....

73,s Dennis E. Barrow, WB4GQX
Rt. 7, Heard Road
Cumming, GA 30130

David and Ted, K4NTA, replied to Dennis. If anyone has information about other groups in near-by areas, please step forward. The BEACON and other FADCA activities have kept Florida reasonably well knit together in this rapid growth period, but we need to look ourside our large local region and help the realization of coordinated linking goals. [Ed.]

2323 SW 35th Pl #5G
Gainesville, FL 32608
October 10, 1984

Dear Gwyn:

I hope things with you are well. I got my Beacon the other day and read it cover to cover. I really like the new format. The reason for my letter is two fold. First I would like to know if it is possible to borrow the original video tape on the "Introduction to Packet". There are about 3 or 4 poeple here in Gainesville that would like to copy it for themselves. I had Jack's KB4B tape but I am sure it is a copy of a copy of a copy. If it is possible to borrow it I would need a VHS format tape.

The second reason for my letter has to do with news for the newsletter. There are a few of us here in Gainesville that are going to form a packet special interest group. As of this date we have about 16 charter members. Our main objective is to establish a digipeater for Gainesville. At this time there are only 2 people that have TNCs, myself and WA4NWO, Joe DiPietro. Hopefully with the establishment of a digipeater this number will grow. I would like to put out a call for any Beacon readers that are in the North-Central Fla area to contact me if they are interested in joining our group.

I'll be glad to supply you with input for the newsletter on packet activity in the Gainesville area. We are aiming for having something on the air before the end of the year. That's all for now and I'll be looking forward to hearing from you.

Best 73, Bill Crews, WB2CPV

Bill, I'll loan you that VHS tape as soon as I locate it. I picked up the VHS tape in my shack that I thought to be the "intro" tape and it is the TNC test patterns recorded by Bob Sikes, KE4VR, back in May. DOES ANYONE HAVE THE VHS INTRO TAPE THAT FADCA PURCHASED? So glad to hear of your activity there and your plans. Please send info in every month. Also check in with Bob Johnson, WB4JCM at the Univ of Fla. He has a packet board and is interested in networking. Bob's home phone 371-7694. [Ed.]

The Software Approch to packet radio has hit the professional publications. EDN for Oct 18 has an article by Bob Richardson, W4UCH on his code for performing SDLC/HDLC functions in software.

Want a nice 23 cm amplifier? HI-SPEC, right here in Jupiter, FL manufactures a nice 100w output unit that requires about 5 watts drive. Write to box 387, ZIP 33468. (305) 746-5031. (-3070 eves.) Ott Fiebel - W4WSR.

OVERVIEW OF PCCM
(PROGRAMMABLE COMMUNICATIONS CONTROL MODULE)
GUY CARBONNEAU, KA4VWW

The following is a description of a proposed linking device for packet communications submitted at the FADCA linking meeting in Melbourne, FL.

The PCCM was designed as a device to link a high-speed data source to up to 16 communications terminals. The PCCM acepts synchronous data packets from a high speed source and routes it to the communications terminals on its buss according to the addresses indicated in each packet. Through the use of a Z-8 microprocessor the PCCM becomes a uniquely intelligent high-speed multiplexor. The PCCM is composed of a master controller board interconnected via a S-100 buss to slave boards (each controlling two terminal devices).

MASTER BOARD

The master board utilizes a Z-8 microprocessor with three communications ports (RS-232). One of the ports is designated as the high-speed data source port. The second port is configured to connect to a microprocessor for downloading software into the PCCM. The third port is identical to the first port; these two ports are for syschronous communications although port 3 is a passive port utilized for chaining multiple PCCMs together. Although these ports are configured synchronously, they can be programmed to be used in an asynchronous environment; this ability is provided though the master board's dual-channel USART.

The master board at system start-up sends a request via port 2 to a microcomputer asking it to download its command file. The command file sets up the operating parameters of the PCCM. This manner of start-up gives the operator a flexibility to reconfigure the PCCM's operating environment easily.

At start-up the master verifies the integrity of the slave units utilizing a series of resident diagnostics. During operation, the master board acts as a traffic handler for the routing of the data from the high-speed port (port 1) to the individual slaves. The master continuously polls the slaves for system calls, i.e. data request, local device access, etc.

SLAVE BOARDS

Also utilizing a Z-8 microprocessor, the slave board controls up to two terminal devices. At start up each slave receives information from the master board which formats it to its terminal attachments; it then performs diagnostics and returns the results to the master board.

PCCM FOR HIGH SPEED LINKING

Because of the flexibilty of the PCCM, it could be used with little modification for high speed packet linking. For example, each one of the slave boards with its Z-8530 could be programmed as a two port digipeater. One port could be 1200 bauds on two meters, and the other a link into a high-speed network on 220 or 1260 Mhz. The master board would take care of the routing. Another possibility would be for a slave board to serve as an AMTOR gateway to say 20 meters. Here again the master would route the AMTOR slave, with its special program, to either the two meter digipeater or on to the high speed network. As you can see there are many possibilities for the PCCM in packet radio liking.

Because of GATOR ONE and K4NTA's area-code addressing scheme, there exists the possibility that these software developments could be implemented within the above concepts. (For further reading regarding GATOR ONE refer to the past issues of the FADCA>BEACON.) Additional work such as protocol handling and data rates would have to be looked at. However, because of the flexibility of the PCCM these types of questions could be answered using the PCCM as a prototype development system. For further information or comments, please feel free to contact me.

BROWARD CHAPTER NEWS
Tom Kneisel, K4GFG
1600 SW 115 Ave, Davie, Fl 33325

The first meeting of the Broward Chapter of FADCA was held on October 20 at the QTH of K4GFG in Davie. There were nine hams present, three who are already on packet and two who are putting together TAPR boards. The other other four were interested in packet but not yet committed. Although he could not come to the meeting, W4FQM sent a status report on the Hollywood digipeater. The radio gear (25 watt) and the omni antenna are on hand. The site will be the top of the ten story Hollywood Memorial Hospital. (Emergency power!) The TAPR board is on order, and Ed says the station will be in digipeater operation no later than the first of the year. Longer range plans are to cross link it to his 146.70 RTTY machine so those users may use the station as remote terminals.

We then discussed linking. Several members are involved in the Gator 1 effort, to modify the 220 Mhz radio gear for data transmission and outfit 9600 baud modems to it. Modem type and baud rate were discussed, as well as the requirements for the radio. There was some interest and comment on networking aspects of packet radio, and we found that one of our members was on the committee that founded the X.25 standard! He has expressed interest in AX.25 and our work, and his help will be most valued.

The local chapter will sponsor a booth at the Broward Hamfest Dec. 1-2, as well as a packet seminar at 1 pm on Saturday. We decided to make the packet demo station capable of operation on SOUTHNET, via a digipeater if necessary.

Finally, we discussed the need for a second local digipeater in north or central Broward county. We discussed equipment procurement and several site possibilities. Since most of the participants at the meeting have yet to get their own packet stations on the air, consideration of that project is still a bit premature.

We decided to hold meetings infrequently, the next one to follow the Broward Hamfest for the benefit of newcomers recruited from the hamfest. We will begin holding a local VHF net on 145.270 Mhz at 8 pm Sunday evenings.

FOR SALE

1. IBM Selectric typewriter modified for serial drive from computer.
2. New 4CX1000 Tube.
3. Harris mobile telephone with secode VP1 control head.

These items are for sale or trade. Call (305)464-7983 after 5 PM.

Red Foley, WA5RCX

Modems for 200 Hz shift. See article in this BEACON. Order from FADCA, address on back cover.

ASCII terminals. FADCA has an arrangement with a surplus terminal supplier for BEEHIVE model B152 dumb terminals. These units are 20" wide, 16" high, and 16" deep, not counting the detachable keyboard. There are 2 RS-232 serial ports, one is software programmable from 75-19.2 kb. These terminals are in working condition, with manual and schematic. Excellent for getting started in packet, or for that 'second station.' $75 drop-shipped direct to your location. A few terminals will be kept on hand for sale to new packet people at hamfests. Write to FADCA, Address on back page.

WANTED: AZDEN PCS-3000 transmitter bodies without control heads (or very low priced complete units.) Gwyn Reedy, W1BEL. (813)689-3355.

Xerox 820 bare board, partly assembled, with all new parts - make offer. Bill Spielberger. (H)(813)876-3906, (W)(813)879-8230.

BREVARD COUNTY PACKET RADIO

By Jerry Quimby N4AJH
150 Churchhill Ave, Satellite Beach, FL 32937

I am starting a new column for the FADCA > BEACON, entitled BREVARD COUNTY PACKET RADIO. This column will be about what is going on in packet radio in Brevard (the Greater Melbourne area). Break-throughs, failures, ideas, and the like. I hope it will be informative and enjoyable to read. So with the introduction out of the way, on with the show.

This being the first one, I thought it would be a good idea to introduce the people here in Brevard who are on Packet Radio:

N4AJH	Jerry	Satellite Beach
K3AAX	Dave	Melbourne
N2WX	Howie	Palm Bay
KB4IU	Jack	Satellite Beach
N4BE	Jim	Melbourne
N4DNW	Bill	Palm Bay
AC7N	Pascal	Melbourne
N5AUV	George	Palm Bay
K4ZS	Fred	Titusville
N2WX-7	Brevard County Digipeater	

This list reflects all the known packet people here. If I left someone out, please contact me so I can update this list.

WHAT'S NEW?

Well, your's truly is currently involved in writing a Bulletin Board System for the area. I am expecting to have it on-line in about 2 to 3 weeks. It will feature basic meessage storage and retrieval, news bulletins, and something new, an Items for Trade section. An Upload/Download feature will be added later on, as well as many other features, so watch for it.

We have also been toying around with the idea of making a 10 Meter link. All the hardware needed has been acquired. I would like some comments on the idea. What do you think?

On December 3, 1984, some of us will be in Merritt Island giving a Packet Radio Demonstration to the Brevard Repeater Association (BRA). If you live in the area and would like to attend, the demo will be held during their regular meeting at the Bank Building on the corner of SR520 and SR3. The meetings are held on the second floor and start at 7:00 PM. We are looking forward to introducing the Packet Radio concept to the group.

Now for all you GLB PK-1 users out there who have been trying in vain to see Howie's Digipeater log, here is how to do it:

First clear out the SD and SV fields then type "MS" to get into the CHAT mode. Type "/MLBLOG", hit carriage return, then ESCAPE. That puts you back into the command mode. Then type "AI". The log will appear like magic on the screen. The trick is to send an unnumbered info packet to the digipeater. Another wonder of modern technology.

Well that's it for now. My apologies if I seemed to be somewhat disorganized with this first article, I'm being rushed. Gwyn needs this today! 73's to all, see you next month.

FADCA SQUELCH TALES

By Keith O'Brien, N4ZQ

Last month's issue the BEACON saw the connect request go out for someone to report on FADCA net activities. Being new at this packet business, and really not up to speed as to what's happening, I figured I could at least report on what's been flying across the CRT. Not to mention your editor might have been bending my arm a bit too! If nothing else, it might loosen up his work load. But then again, the way I type, it could increase it.

Net reporting is not so much for "those in the know", but to keep "us" not in the mainstream abreast as to what others are doing. Hopefully, it will call someones attention to a problem or project that's taking place. Maybe prompt you to jump into it. Could be you have experience in a particular field, access to needed materials, or just know a good source of information that could help someone along. Having worked for a large company for the last 10 years, inter office communication has always been a problem. Sometimes it be nice to know just what the other person is doing. As hams, communicating among ourselves should not be a problem. However, not always do our personal schedules allow us to check into one of the FADCA sponsored nets. Hopefully we will be able to fill that information gap here.

Enough from me, let's see what exciting things have been going on.

Ted, K4NTA, NCS for the 75 meter FADCA Net, reports that the BBS is performing yeoman service. The BBS beacon is back on the system and a possible Heathkit weather station interface is in the works...W1BEL, Gwyn, between all his organizational work, now has VE3ILW's TNC on loan and running as BEL-1. Hooked to an omni vertical, it's getting much use as the Tampa Local Area Network digipeater. Soon the borrowed TNC will be replaced by a kit board....Speaking of Gwyn, both he and Pat, KF4EF, have been out selling Packet Racket. Three area demos in the last month alone, with the big Clearwater Hamfest still to come in November... The super signal from Davie belongs to K4GFG. Tom has been doing some 220 mhz testing with Hamtronics boards. This is in an effort to get the cross state 9600 baud network off the ground. Stay tuned for future reports on this one... Melbourne to Tampa (125 miles) conditions have been spotty. From here on the west coast a good way to check propagation is to check with N2WX-7 Heard log. In a unconnected state, tx a /MLBLOG and see if you print the log list. Howie did report that WX-7 was having trouble, but a 3khz deviation tune up corrected it... Keep the weekend of Feb 2 and 3 open, as Joel, KI4T, reports a big packet conference planned. Also KI4T reports that Martin county EOC now has their TNC. That makes 3 counties on the south east coast equipped with such. Does yours?... Ocala and Gainesville, much needed areas for a connection to Jacksonville, has been activated by K4OZS and W4DFU respectively. Bob and Joe, WA4NWO, got a fine signal from Gatorland at the U of Florida. With their antenna up 175 feet and 160 watts, they're just awesome at this qth. Larry is up in the clouds too from Ocala, using a new TAPR TNC kit board to a 100 foot omni. Beam to follow shortly...Growth is the name of the game. Since I've put my kit board on the air, just a few weeks ago, have seen 3 new callsigns come up in the Tampa LAN. Welcome to Bill KB4ZS, Bob K4OQ Clearwater, and N4KPU, Howard. Steve, N4AIY, is constructing a TAPR kit. Bob is using the AEA TNC, with Bill and Howard on with a kit board...Not much word from the MIAMI area, but Carlos, K4CAG, reports RAM addition to the TNC working well coast of Florida. The only signal from that direction comes from KK4S in Sarasota. Ray, point that beam to the south and wake them up in Venice, Ft. Myers etc. WB1CYM in Port Charlotte and KB4LLO are building kit TNCs, so listen for them to the South...K4AHO beacon reports that the BBS is on line now. Look foward to checking into it Jim to see what going on in the City Beautiful of Orlando...Pat finally got KF4EF back on the air after a week of interfacing problems to his Icom 25a. Having to use a relay for keying. Suggestions?... Anyone else using a C 64 for a terminal like me? How about some packet picture swapping. See Compute's November GAZETTE...

Thats it for this month. Happy connects to all and $49... Keith

FADCA>BEACON

The FADCA>BEACON Is published monthly by the Florida Amateur Digital Communications Association (FADCA), 812 Childers Loop, Brandon, FL 33511. FADCA is a non-profit organization devoted to research, development, education, and public service. Membership is open to anyone interested in supporting FADCA purposes. For introductory information about FADCA and packet radio please send a self addressed, stamped (37 cents) business size envelope to the FADCA address. FADCA is governed by a board of directors and administered by officials appointed by the directors. The directors are:

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